

The Gift by allonsysilvertongue

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, Jim & Joyce shopping for Eleven, Jim Hopper & Joyce Byers being parent to Eleven, Jim gifting Eleven something precious, because that makes my heart full

Language: English

Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things), Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Eleven & Mike Wheeler, Joyce Byers/Eleven, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper

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Summary:

Minutes before the Snow Ball, Jim Hopper gave Eleven a gift.

The Gift

Author's Note:

This is Papa Jim being a parent and Joyce being a mum to Eleven.

The Gift

His truck was idling by the parking lot, facing the middle school directly. Next to him, El leaned forward in her seat, watching as the other kids walked in. He spotted Dustin not far from where they were, talking to Steve through the unwind car window.

"I'll go now."

Jim blinked at the sound of the seat belt being released from its clasped.

"Wait," he put a hand on her arm. "Hold on."

She shot him a quizzical look and he could see the hint of fear in her eyes. The fear that he might change his mind about letting her out tonight and was going to drive them both home.

"Usually...." He cleared her throat, a little out of his comfort zone right now. " During prom – not that this is one or something – but *usually*, the boy gives you a corsage."

Her brows crinkled. "Corsage?"

Jim rubbed the back of his neck before he shifted, angling his body towards his young charge.

"It's – um – a bouquet of flowers, you know, to wear on your dress," he explained as El glanced down at her own blue dress, "or on your wrist."

"Like bandanna," she nodded in understanding, referencing the time,

a month before, when she came back with that punk over do. "Mike will give me a corsage and I... put it on?"

"Nah," Jim shook his head. "Mike probably wouldn't. It's just a school dance but – uh- I have something for you for the dance. Not flowers or anything but – it means a lot to me."

His fingers brushed lightly against the blue hair ribbon around his wrist, something he had worn to remind him of Sara even through all the drinking and prescription drugs. That was *before....* Before he found himself surrounded by Joyce and middle school kids and three teenagers banding together to fight a monster, before El came into his life.... before he signed the papers,

He had never parted from the bracelet he kept around his wrist but that was his past. Now... Perhaps, it was time to embrace this second change and this new person that he damn well would fight to be a permanent fixture in his life. It used to belong to his little girl Sara but she wasn't here and he would never know what she would want for him, but he figured, she wouldn't want him to keep living in the past. El is as good as his now.

Pulling the bracelet free from his wrist, Jim gently took El's hand and slipped the bracelet around her wrist. He adjusted it so it would fit her.

"But this is yours," she looked up at him.

"It's yours now," he smiled down at her. Jim reached out to ruffle her hair but she moved her head out of the way before he could mess it up. They had both spent nearly half an hour on it after all. He patted her shoulder. "Don't lose it, kid."

She smiled, fiddling with the bracelet.

"I won't."

"Hey," he chuckled, "matches the colour of your dress."

The dress that he had to call Joyce a few days earlier for help. She had come with him while El waited at home. She had brought Will along strangely enough, and they bought the dress for the Snow Ball

together with a few other pieces of clothing for his kid to wear every other day. His cutout shirts were too big and baggy. He personally wanted El to look presentable now that he wouldn't have to keep hiding her, that the boys and Max would likely drop by the cabin after school to hang out.

Joyce had picked out several comfortable shirts, blouses, skirts and pants, two dresses, together with hair bands and hair clips along with eyeliners and lip gloss.

"What about panties?" Joyce mouthed, looking over Will's head at him.

He tips of his ears turned crimson as he shrugged

"Probably need those too," he muttered.

He had shuffled awkwardly after them, feeling out of place in the ladies' department as did Will. Joyce had at one point, snapped at him to wait in the car because his constant hovering was scaring the teenage girl in the store who was only trying to help them.

"Ice cream, buddy?"

Will had jumped at that and they made a dash for the exit.

"Can I go now?" El asked, breaking through his reverie.

"Yeah, don't get into any trouble. I'll be right out here if anything happens. See you at nine."

She nodded.

"Look that's Will and his mom. You should wait with her," she smiled and hopped off the truck.

With a wave, she was gone but he never took his eyes off her until she disappeared behind the doors into the school.